

NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE OFFICER
FOR STRATEGIC PROGRAMS

OCA 3327/1 88

National Intelligence Council

29 September 1988

NOTE FOR: John Helgerson, OCA

Attached is the response from Secretary Carlucci to the letters from Les Aspin to me and the others noted in the last paragraph of Aspin's letter.

We worked with DOD on this and were able to get the wording in Carlucci's last paragraph to distinguish our role from the others in the response.

Larry Helgerson

OCA FILE SALT / HASO
Rep Aspin

cc: ACIS
Dick Kerr, DDI

STAT

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

20 SEP 1988

OCA 3327/88

Honorable Les Aspin
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

OCA FILE

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to review the Defense Policy Panel's report on START. I am attaching a brief response to several of the points raised by the Report.

As you will appreciate, I was gratified that the Panel agrees with the long-standing Administration position that arms control is only one component of an effective national security policy. Since 1981, it has been our position that force modernization and arms reductions both are necessary, and complementary, goals. The Panel's endorsement of this and its recognition of the role arms control can--and cannot--play is helpful, and we will look to your support in sustaining this case in the future.

Because the Report was written before the Moscow summit, it would be unfair for me to criticize its speculative comments about that meeting. I would note, however, that the President's often stated position is that no treaty would be preferable to a bad treaty. I believe the results of the Moscow summit sustain the President's commitment to this position.

Finally, I want to take issue with the suggestion that the Administration has devoted inadequate attention to the force structure implications of various post-START outcomes. We have indeed done a substantial amount of analysis on the adequacy of our deterrent posture under START. Given satisfactory resolution of certain outstanding negotiating issues--and continued Congressional support of the strategic modernization program (which is essential independent of a START treaty)--I have no doubt that our post-START deterrent force will meet our goals of deterrence, stability, flexibility. That said, we have deliberately refrained from choosing "the post-START force" in advance of the conclusion of a Treaty, and we will continue to do so. The attached paper amplifies our position in this regard.

I have taken the liberty of coordinating my reply with Paul Nitze, Ed Rowley, Bill Burns and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Larry Gershwin also reviewed it to ensure that any intelligence information it contains is consistent with the Intelligence Community views.

Sincerely,

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SFP

START Limits and Constraints

The President has stated that his objectives for a START agreement are that it must include deep reductions, be stabilizing, and be effectively verifiable. These objectives continue to be our guidelines in negotiating a START Treaty.

The Report's conclusion that "under a START Agreement, the U.S. must plan for a Soviet force not of 6000 weapons, but of many, many more" is overstated. As the Report notes, the Soviets will be able to deploy more legal weapons under START than the accountable 6,000 limit -- due to the U.S.-Soviet agreement in START to count bombers with gravity bombs and SRAMs as one weapon. Contrary to the implication of the Report, this agreed counting rule was not an oversight or a drawback. On the contrary, the U.S. fought long and hard to win Soviet agreement to this rule which is central to the underlying U.S. philosophy in START. The U.S. position has always been to encourage both sides to develop their forces away from the more destabilizing systems (particularly heavy multi-warhead ICBMs) to the more stabilizing systems better suited for a retaliatory rather than a preemptive attack role such as heavy bombers -- which take a long time to reach their targets and may be recalled.

The START Treaty is designed to continue encouraging stabilizing and retaliatory weapon systems. One way to do this was to give bombers a "discount" for their weapons. Thus, at Reykjavik the US and USSR acknowledged bombers with gravity bombs and SRAMs would count as one weapon under START. The U.S. has also proposed counting rules for ALCMs that would similarly treat these systems less stringently than ballistic missile RVs. We have less concern about giving a discount for these weapons because of their slow flying, retaliatory nature. Whether the Soviets will take full advantage of these rules remains to be seen. The weapons that the U.S. seeks to constrain most tightly are fast-flying ICBMs, especially heavy ICBMs. The Soviet side is allowed only 154 such missiles -- half of the Soviet inventory permitted under SALT I and II.

A major concern in SALT II was that no direct limits were placed on throw-weight. The Soviet Union has approximately three times the ballistic missile throw-weight of the U.S. Under START, this asymmetry would be greatly reduced, since the Soviet Union has agreed to cut its throw-weight by approximately 50 percent from its current level. In 1980, the Senate Armed Services Committee, in its report "Military Implications of the proposed SALT II Treaty Relating to the National Defense," stated that "A lower limit on the number of MIRVed missiles, and cutting by one-half the limit on the

number of heavy missiles permitted to be MPRVed ... would have helped to alleviate U.S. concerns. Not only would it have reduced the number of warheads available to strike the U.S. deterrent, but it would have signalled Soviet willingness to agree to measures which would enhance, rather than undermine, deterrence." This will be achieved in START.

The Defense Policy Panel Report also indicates its concern with the possibility of a Soviet breakout through having stockpiles of warheads to place on deployed ballistic missiles. Since throw-weight is a factor in the ability of a missile to deliver destructive power, the limit on throw-weight will also constitute a significant constraint on Soviet ability to "breakout" of a START Treaty by placing additional warheads on their missiles. Moreover, in this same context, we are developing provisions, including on-site inspections, to ensure that the actual number of warheads on ballistic missiles does not exceed the declared number.

The Report also indicated its concern with the numbers of non-deployed ballistic missiles (NDMs) that a START Treaty would allow, and the possibility of launching these weapons from unprepared sites. This concern is valid and that is why the U.S. has explored limits on NDMs as well as additional constraints such as limits on the number of NDMs at an ICBM launcher deployment area. Some form of constraints, combined with tagging and on site inspections, would inhibit the use of these systems as a serious illegal augmentation force. The problem of non-deployed missiles is much more serious in the case of mobile launchers where there is an inherent refire capability as well as the ability to bring the launcher to the stored missile. This is one of the reasons the Administration is insisting on resolving the question of verification of mobiles before agreeing to permit mobile ICBMs.

Finally, the Report indicates correctly that under SALT I and II the Soviets were able to increase legally the number of warheads from 2000 in 1972 to over 10,000 today without violating SALT limitations. The START Treaty would do just the opposite. Deployed ballistic missiles and their warheads would be tightly limited and there would also be constraints on non-deployed missiles, thereby limiting the risk of undetected Soviet breakout through alternative forces and cheating. Given effective verification provisions, the Soviets will have no more than 4,900 deployed ballistic missile warheads under a START agreement. They could deploy 10,000 weapons only through a fundamental shift in their force structure policy; i.e.; by placing much more emphasis on slower arriving bomber weapons than they do today, thereby taking advantage of "discounted" bomber weapons available under the START framework.

Verification

I do not agree with the conclusion that the emphasis on verification in the public START debate is "misplaced." Effective verification is a critical prerequisite for the U.S. government in concluding a START agreement; it will certainly be required for public support of the Treaty and Senate approval.

The Report correctly states that one of the priorities of a START verification regime is to ensure that Treaty limits are being observed. The Report also correctly identifies several of the significant verification problems that a Treaty must satisfactorily address -- the special problems posed by mobile ICBMS, the possibility of a re-entry vehicle breakout capability, the possibility of a breakout capability resulting from undetected cruise missile assets and the possibility of a covert non-deployed ballistic missile force (in particular those associated with mobiles). As the Report suggests, in each of these areas there is and will be some risk of Soviet breakout. Of these, the risks associated with ballistic missiles are the most serious and deserve the most attention. Our view, however, is that the combined verification procedures proposed by the United States can reduce these risks significantly.

Turning first to the question of a covert non-deployed ballistic missile force. START is the first strategic arms control negotiation which seeks to limit effectively this force. No verification can give us perfect confidence that the Soviets will not have a stash of missiles hidden away at the time the Treaty enters into force that they do not declare, nor will any Treaty give us perfect confidence that they cannot covertly produce new missiles. The verification provisions that we are seeking will, taken as a whole, reduce this very serious risk substantially. First, they will require the Soviets to give us extensive and detailed information about the number and location of Soviet missiles. Second, baseline and short notice on-site inspection will verify the accuracy of that data. Third, our position calls for continuous monitoring of critical production facilities and tagging with unique, non-reproducible identification markers, which can be subsequently read during inspections of support facilities. Continuous monitoring will preclude the use of the existing infrastructure for Soviet clandestine production. Fourth, tagging will complicate introduction of covert missiles into the existing infrastructure, raising even further the cost to the Soviet Union of cheating. Finally, the U.S. is still designing a suspect-site inspection regime which will add an essential element by helping to deter Soviet production and

maintenance of undeclared missiles at facilities that do not fall under other types of on-site inspection. This regime takes into account the limitations pointed out by the Committee, e.g., protection of sensitive US facilities. These key verification provisions, together with other such measures including, for example, a limitation on the number and location of soft site launchers, interact in a synergistic fashion to lower risk of Soviet breakout through covert forces.

We agree that the monitoring of mobile missiles is a difficult task even with enhanced NTM coverage and cooperative measures between the two sides. It is because of these concerns that the U.S. proposed that such systems be banned. However, we are continuing to study various verification proposals to see if the problem can be made more manageable. Only if we can solve the significant verification problems could we propose to allow a limited, tightly constrained mobile missile force.

We similarly share the concern expressed by the Panel regarding the potential for Soviet breakout from possible counting rules for re-entry vehicles. We believe that the rules we have developed, together with the limitations on throw-weight which we are proposing, should allow us to limit this threat while protecting our own equities. Specifically the U.S. has proposed on-site inspection to verify the number of RVs on deployed SLBMs and ICBMs. Further, the U.S. approach to limiting throw-weight, will complement this OSI provision and could further reduce the RV breakout risk.

Turning to heavy bombers, the U.S. and the Soviets are working to design an effective inspection regime. This inspection could include for example, the exterior, as well as the weapons bays, of aircraft. We believe that this inspection regime along with the ALCM counting rules will allow the U.S. to have confidence that the Soviets are living within the allowed Treaty limits. But we see less threat from Soviet cheating in this area than with fast flying, destabilizing, ballistic missiles.

SLCMs, as the Panel correctly notes, are very difficult to verify. Despite years of intensive effort to develop an effective SLCM verification regime, we have yet to find a solution. We are continuing to work on this problem. The Soviet proposals in this area have contributed nothing substantive toward developing a regime to provide for effective verification. Specifically, with respect to the Soviet proposal mentioned in the report, U.S. experts concluded that the false positive rate and large potential for false negatives would increase, not lessen the need to inspect a ship or

submarine, which would lead to unacceptable disruption of naval operations in order to count the number of nuclear SLCMs. This fact, coupled with the relative ease in uploading a just inspected vessel with nuclear armed SLCMs, makes a mockery of any Soviet verification proposal made to date. It would be preferable to recognize that we have not found an effective verification regime. Therefore, we have proposed a simple approach where each side would unilaterally declare the number of nuclear armed SLCMs it plans.

With respect to the overall issue of verification, we agree that a balance must be struck between the need to protect U.S. operational flexibility and sensitive technologies, while at the same time providing for an effective regime that will minimize the potential for Soviet cheating. It is in this light that the U.S. proposals have been formulated and tabled in Geneva.

SDI/Ballistic Missile Defense

The Report concludes that the "Soviet capacity for rapid breakout under START undercuts the ability of U.S. defenses to protect silo-based missiles" and that a Phase I SDI deployment "clearly would fail to deal with the full Soviet threat." These conclusions are based on assumptions not supported by the facts.

The Phase I strategic defense system is designed to satisfy JCS requirements for military effectiveness. In general terms, the JCS have specified that a Phase I defense be able to disrupt significantly the critical leading edge of a Soviet ballistic missile attack on U.S. strategic assets that are essential to an effective U.S. retaliatory response. This leading edge is estimated to comprise more than half of the total Soviet ballistic missile force.

Contrary to the Defense Policy Report's assumption, the JCS requirements are not based on defending only missile silos (nor has the Administration ever viewed a strategic defense in such limited terms), but also as a national homeland defense that would in fact include defending such assets as bomber bases, ballistic missile submarine ports, and critical command, control, and communication facilities. In addition, while it is not clear how the Committee derived its curious assumption that a Phase I defense would in all scenarios and against all threats destroy 2,000 RVs, it is clear that the Committee assumed in its analysis that all RVs that survived the defense would still be allocated in a uniform and coherent fashion against the set of targets at which they were directed. This

is a common mistake that significantly understates the implications of a strategic defense against ballistic missiles. In fact, because the defense could attack ballistic missiles randomly in the boost and post-boost phases, and in a preferential manner in the midcourse phase, the efficiency of the ballistic missile attack is reduced substantially. Rather than having the number of pre-planned RVs arriving on each of the intended targets, such a defense would result in an asymmetrical target coverage in order to improve the penetration of the defenses, with some targets receiving more RVs than necessary and some receiving none at all. The end result would be that Soviet planners could not predict with any degree of confidence that the required target damage would be achieved. This lack of confidence on their part would strengthen deterrence and add to U.S. force survivability by increasing the price of a Soviet attack.

What is more, the JCS requirements stipulate that a Phase I defense be capable of achieving its mission against a specified potential Soviet ballistic missile threat which is significantly larger than that postulated by the report's START breakout case and even the current Soviet force. If a Phase I defense system is capable of satisfying the JCS requirements against a potential Soviet ballistic missiles threat that is larger even than the current Soviet threat, it must be capable of achieving these requirements with relative ease against the much smaller Soviet START breakout threat postulated by the Defense Policy Report.

Force Structure

The section of the Report that deals with force structure implies that the Administration is remiss in not announcing a post-START force. The Report delves into the factors that should be considered when one builds a force structure (survivability, redundancy, penetrability, etc.) and then analyzes a force structure constructed by the Panel that falls short in many of these areas. It should be understood from the outset that the force structure analyzed by the Panel was its own and certainly not the only force structure that would be allowed in a post-START world. In fact, there is a significant range of such forces which could be devised. The Administration has intentionally not decided upon a single post-START force structure.

The Administration's decision not to designate "the post-START force" is based on sound logic. First, the Treaty restrictions are not yet complete. Second, the Treaty itself should not be designed solely around a single U.S. force

structure. Rather, the Treaty must provide for robust deterrent forces under a range of force structures which may evolve under future administrations, future Congresses, future budgets, future technologies and most important, future threats. Third, numerous special interest groups are already clamoring for an early U.S. decision on the post-START force -- some in order to sell their particular hobby horses, others to begin reductions unilaterally even before the Treaty is complete. Our security and negotiating leverage require that, as we negotiate, we continue to maintain our ongoing modernization programs. We must ensure that our existing programs can provide for increase security for the U.S. and our allies during the years ahead and that we protect future options which we may wish to exploit to maintain strategic stability. A START Treaty by its nature involves trade-offs which reduce, limit, and narrow options. It makes no sense therefore, to give the Soviets further information and indications of how best to deny us our most viable options -- especially while we are in the process of negotiations.

One conclusion of the Report's force structure section is that the limits placed on the Soviet SS-18 force by the Treaty are inadequate to protect the silo based U.S. ICBM force because of the growing accuracies of the other Soviet ICBMs and the potential of a massive Soviet breakout. It should be noted a START Treaty was never viewed as a vehicle for eliminating the vulnerability of our silo-based ICBM systems, nor was START ever viewed as providing a complete solution to all of our strategic problems. The intent of START is to enhance overall stability, as well as to bring about deep reductions in the ballistic missile forces of both sides, to include the Soviets SS-18 force. The fact that the Soviets have agreed to cut the SS-18 force in half should be viewed as a major victory in the START negotiations.

The Report correctly points out that because of these reductions, Soviet planners must commit more than the entire SS-18 force in an attempt to destroy the postulated U.S. ICBM force. Indeed the US could structure its silo based forces so that the Soviet Union would have to use up not only all of its most capable ICBMs, but a far greater percent of its overall force to destroy a small percentage of our forces. The Report then denigrates this achievement, however, by stating that because of a postulated massive break-out potential of Soviet forces and the increasing accuracies of the SS-24/SS-25 systems, the Soviets would have almost 7000 hard target kill weapons available; as a result, the Report contends, the Soviet post-START force could still assure the destruction of the U.S. post-START ICBM force. The Report's "fact" that the Soviets would have this many weapons (some 4000 over their notional

START force) to commit is attributed to the failure to restrain non-deployed ballistic missiles and the Soviets' ability rapidly to deploy these missiles and launch them from unprepared surface launchers. As is stated in other sections of this paper, the problem of non-deployed missiles has yet to be addressed to both sides' satisfaction and the ability "rapidly" to deploy 4000 extra warheads by covert means and launch them from unprepared sites is much easier said than done. As a result, we believe this scenario is improbable and, if fact, would take years to accomplish. Additionally, the SS-24 and SS-25 are presently suited most appropriately to soft and medium hard targets -- rather than hard targets -- due to lower accuracies and reliability.

In any case, the best solution to protecting our ICBM force does not lie in the reduction of the Soviet SS-18 force, but working on the survivability of the ICBM force itself. (In this regard, we are gratified that the Panel's Report accepts what the Administration has been saying since 1981: arms control in and of itself, cannot provide for national security; it is but one component of a coherent national security posture.) There are a number of ICBM survivability options; the difficulty is to get a political majority around any one of them, especially in times of tight budgets. Defense, mobility, hardening, transportability, deception, and combinations of these are candidates that the Administration is exploring. If our negotiations can produce agreed provisions for the effective verification of mobile ICBMs, I have recommended the Rail Mobile Peacekeeper to provide the increased survivability and flexibility in a cost effective manner.

Finally, the Report alleges that continuing to deploy bigger but fewer weapons platforms is risky under a START agreement that favors more delivery systems. In particular, the Report evinces the fear that with fewer SSBNs in the mid-1990s than we have had in the past, a major ASW breakthrough could jeopardize the survivability of our SLBM leg of the TRIAD. The Navy's move to an all Trident force with fewer numbers of SSBNs than in the past has been planned since the early 1970s. Contrary to the Report's suggestions, this approach has been endorsed and supported by every Administration since the mid-1970s. This move to an all Trident force was based on its increased capabilities in the areas of lower operating costs, greater time at sea, vastly improved quietness and counter ASW capabilities, and the longer range of the missiles it could carry. The introduction of the 4000nm range Trident I missile increased the SSBN patrol area to 17 million square nm (almost six times more area than our 41 SSBNs had in the 1960s and 70s). The Trident II missile -- which will ultimately equip all of our SSBNs in START -- has at

least that range, and greater operational flexibility and capability. Given the greater alert rates of the Ohio class submarines, the U.S. could, if it chose to do so, keep as many submarine-based warheads at sea under START as it does today.

With respect to the ASW breakthrough, the Navy sponsors an aggressive SSBN-security ASW research program in both Navy and non-Navy channels. Traditional acoustic as well as revolutionary non-acoustic methods are studied, including Soviet work in the latter area. Even the unlikely event of a major advance in wide-area ASW sensor technology would not, in and of itself, affect the balance; similar strides in C³I and retargeting capabilities would also be necessary if this phenomenon was to have useful application. From our experience to date with land mobile-based targets, we know this to be a daunting task. Were, however, the oceans to become "transparent," the difference between 37 SSBNs and 20 SSBNs would not be meaningful. (For those who do believe, however, that such a difference is meaningful, our START proposals would allow us to increase the size of our SSBN force should the United States decide it wants to do so in the future.) For example, under our proposal we can increase the number of submarines deployed -- without a corresponding increase in the total number of weapons deployed -- by simply reducing the number of missiles deployed on each SSBN or downloading warheads from selected missiles. For the foreseeable future, therefore, the survivability of our SSBN force will rest on our submarines' large patrol area and stealth -- advantages we will continue to maintain over the USSR.

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ONE HUNDREDTH CONGRESS

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June 7, 1988

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Mr. Lawrence K. Gershwin
 National Intelligence Officer for Strategic Programs
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 Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear Mr. Gershwin:

On May 16-17, 1988, I chaired a set of hearings on the current status of the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) and the implications of U.S. arms control positions for U.S. strategic forces. While we were unable to receive testimony from the State Department and Defense Department, several former government officials and other leading authorities did appear, as did the National Intelligence Officer for Strategic Forces.

The Defense Policy Panel of the House Armed Services Committee issued its report, Breakout, Verification and Force Structure: Dealing with the Full Implications of START, on May 24, 1988. This report, a copy of which is attached, addresses the potential for a Soviet breakout from a START agreement and examines the implications of the treaty for the structure of U.S. strategic forces.

The Defense Policy Panel is now looking at ways that verification measures might improve our ability to detect preparations for breakout. We are also looking more closely at the force structure implications. Our work, however, is predicated on the assumption that our analysis presented in the report is generally on the mark. Whether you share this judgment is something we should know as soon as possible.

Consequently, I am requesting your formal evaluation of our report and would like to receive your reactions by June 17, 1988. While I understand the reluctance many Administration officials expressed on testifying on these matters before the Moscow Summit, the current pause in the START negotiations offers a suitable opportunity for this kind of examination.

-2-

I am looking forward to your response. I also might decide to hold further hearings on this subject once I have reviewed the reactions I have solicited from the State Department, Defense Department, ACDA and the Intelligence Community.

Sincerely,



Les Aspin
Chairman

LA/cmb

Enclosures